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DE RUEHSL #0111 0411609
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 101609Z FEB 06
FM AMEMBASSY BRATISLAVA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9516
INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L BRATISLAVA 000111

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STATE FOR EUR/NCE
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E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/10/2016
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [KISL](#) [KPAO](#) [BO](#) [LO](#)
SUBJECT: SLOVAKIA POLITICAL ROUNDUP, FEBRUARY 10, 2006

REF: A. BRATISLAVA 0051
[1](#)B. BRATISLAVA 0099
[1](#)C. BRATISLAVA 0100
[1](#)D. BRATISLAVA 0101

Classified By: CDA, a.i. Lawrence R. Silverman for Reasons 1.4 (B) and (D).

KDH WITHDRAWAL HURTS THE LITTLE GUYS

[1](#)1. (C) The departure of KDH from the ruling coalition (refs B-D), which resulted in the resignation of three cabinet Ministers and the Chairman of Parliament, has also affected our working-level contacts. The spokesman for former parliament Chairman Pavol Hrusovsky sounded shell-shocked as he packed his office the day the resignations were submitted and accepted. By the day after, KDH MP Julius Brocka was telling us that leaving the coalition was a victory for KDH, as it defined for the voters the true differences between KDH and SDKU. Still, he categorized the two parties as "Coca Cola Classic and Coke Lite," saying that the two shared similar values. He did not preclude future cooperation with SDKU, either, noting that KDH's anger was particularly directed at PM Dzurinda for his handling of the conscientious objector treaty.

SLOVAKIA'S (SMALL) MUSLIM COMMUNITY CALM OVER CARTOONS

[1](#)2. (SBU) Though the Danish Embassy in Bratislava felt comfortable enough to maintain its pre-cartoon security posture, local police raised their presence outside the downtown Embassy in light of the protests/attacks reverberating through the Middle East. Meanwhile, local Muslim leaders reassured Slovaks that there would be no violence. The head of the Islamic Foundation in Slovakia told the media that, although he disagrees with the cartoons, he condemns attacks on the Danish people. However, he said that many Muslims feel that European leaders tolerate anti-Muslim bias, and in some cases actively support it. Similarly, a Muslim representative from the Friends of Islamic Literature said that the cartoon situation has been exaggerated, but that feelings of injustice among Muslims in Europe and abroad have been mounting. He cited the French ban on the hijab (head covering) for women in schools as an example. MFA contacts tell us that they feel the root of these tensions need to be addressed, and that Slovakia -- as a small country with an even smaller Muslim community -- may consider introducing calls for formal dialogue in venues such as the UN.

BELARUS MONITORING SLOVAK MEDIA

13. (C) Giving credence to NGO fears that Belarusian authorities are actively monitoring the democratization programs and media coverage of the Lukashenko regime in Bratislava, the Belarusian Embassy denied a visa to SME daily reporter Mirko Toda, who frequently wrote about Belarus. Specifically, Toda wrote about the Belarusian authorities attitude and monitoring of Slovak NGOs. The Director of the Pontis Foundation told us their employees feel targeted by Belarusian intelligence services, who she believes are keeping close tabs on the Foundation's blacklisted employees.

CORRUPTION COURT HANDS DOWN VERDICTS

14. (U) Slovakia's special court for corruption recently handed down sentences in two corruption cases. The Mayor of Velky Meder, who was caught accepting a SKK 30,000 (USD 950) bribe, was sentenced to nearly three years in prison and a fine equal to the bribe he was caught accepting. Additionally, striking a blow against corruption in the health sector (regarded by most Slovaks as the most corrupt sector of the government), a gynecologist was sentenced to 15 months in jail and a SKK 30,000 (USD 950) fine for asking a family for an SK 5,000 (USD 160) bribe to deliver a baby, and SKK 2,000 (USD 64) for continuing care of the mother.

SILVERMAN